

DATE: 11/04/2008
TIME: 8:57 A.M.
ACTIVITY: Rod Blagojevich home line incoming call.
SESSION: 171 and 173

SPEAKERS:

BLAGOJEVICH: Rod Blagojevich
HARRIS: John Harris

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1 BLAGOJEVICH Hey.
2 HARRIS Hello.
3 BLAGOJEVICH How's it goin'?
4 HARRIS Okay, how are you?
5 BLAGOJEVICH Alright. On the phone with Greenlee.
6 Got a lot of stuff to think about today.
7 We gotta work on this, tomorrow's
8 schedule, what we do.
9 HARRIS Right, right.
10 BLAGOJEVICH So Politico.com p-, put out, put in
11 that, uh, Andy Stern and Balanoff came
12 to see me about Obama's choice for, uh,
13 senator.
14 HARRIS Oh, that's how...
15 BLAGOJEVICH Valerie Jarrett.
16 HARRIS ...that's how they wrote it up?
17 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah.
18 HARRIS Yeah, we should simply just say we meet
19 with Andy and Balanoff often on a number
20 of issues.
21 BLAGOJEVICH Well, my point is...
22 HARRIS Yeah.

1 BLAGOJEVICH ...that they probably got that from Andy
2 Stern. That's a good sign. That would
3 suggest he's an, you know, an emissary
4 for Obama, right?

5 HARRIS Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

6 BLAGOJEVICH I mean possibly.

7 HARRIS Yeah.

8 BLAGOJEVICH I mean they could be emissaries for
9 Valerie Jarrett but I got a feeling in
10 this case it's not.

11 HARRIS No, I don't think it's for Valerie as
12 much as it is for Barack. But it still
13 puzzles me why they wouldn't be a little
14 bit more, uh, overt about it.

15 BLAGOJEVICH I'll tell you why, because they don't
16 want anybody to say that he's saying it.

17 HARRIS Right.

18 BLAGOJEVICH They don't want a trick bag, he, he,
19 they want to be very careful and protect
20 him.

21 HARRIS Yeah, that's what we talked about last
22 night. The probability of Obama trying,
23 being overt about it is low because of
24 all the other people he'll piss off.

25 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

26 HARRIS But they did recommend to us, just call
27 and put the question right on him.

28 BLAGOJEVICH What's that?

29 HARRIS They did recommend to us to call Dave
30 and put the question right on him.

31 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah, another indication, isn't it?

1 HARRIS Well, that's, that's contrary to the
2 other indication. I mean if they, if
3 they think Obama needs to be circumspect
4 and that it, it's in his best interest
5 to be circumspect, why would they ask us
6 to call and put the question on him?

7 BLAGOJEVICH Well, because you're not callin' Obama,
8 you're callin' Axelrod, right?

9 HARRIS Yeah, well I...

10 BLAGOJEVICH Axelrod's gonna speak for Obama.

11 HARRIS ...yeah.

12 BLAGOJEVICH But at the same time, protect him.

13 HARRIS Right.

14 BLAGOJEVICH So let's analyze that. So, tomorrow
15 morning, I would call, I mean, first, I
16 should call Axelrod and congratulate
17 him, shouldn't I?

18 HARRIS Sure, sure.

19 BLAGOJEVICH Huh?

20 HARRIS Sure.

21 BLAGOJEVICH So I call him and congratulate him and
22 then do I bring the Senate thing up or
23 let him do it? I'll say, man, you guys,
24 boy, historic, that's unbelievable, you
25 played, you're in history books.
26 Congratulations. You know.

27 HARRIS I think if you call him to congratulate
28 him, he'll raise it if he wants to talk
29 about it.

30 BLAGOJEVICH Right, and if he doesn't raise it, I
31 don't raise it.

32 HARRIS Correct.

33 BLAGOJEVICH Right?

1 HARRIS Correct.

2 BLAGOJEVICH Okay.

3 (PAUSE)

4 HARRIS Turn out's low in my precinct.

5 (PHONE BEEPS)

6 BLAGOJEVICH Hang on a second, hang on.

7 (Call Waiting)

8 * * * * *

9 BLAGOJEVICH I never let 'em make the invite. 'Cause
10 I never let 'em, I never let 'em get
11 into a conversation to ask me anything.
12 I just volunteered and said I'm comin'.

13 (PAUSE)

14 BLAGOJEVICH He was, you know, happy about that.

15 HARRIS Good. Good.

16 (PAUSE)

17 BLAGOJEVICH So the, you know, the tricks gonna be
18 how do ya conduct, indirectly, and with
19 a certain reserve, you know, a
20 negotiation like a sports agent, where
21 you're pitting one team against another,
22 you know what I mean?

23 HARRIS (UI).

24 BLAGOJEVICH My free agent wants to play for the
25 Cowboys, he wants to play for the
26 Eagles. Okay. How much you offering
27 Obama? What are you offering Madigan?
28 You know what, we can always go to the,
29 we can always go the 49ers with Emil,
30 you know what I mean? We can always end
31 up there. Or me.

32 (PAUSE)

1 HARRIS Well one way to uh, one way to uh r-,
2 you know, reduce the value of their
3 play, of their hand...

4 BLAGOJEVICH Who's they?

5 HARRIS The Obama camp.

6 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah.

7 HARRIS And just kind of ask him, what would ya,
8 what do you, what would you recommend I
9 look for in a senator. Rather than get
10 to the name, get to the, let them, lock
11 them in on a list of what they want. So
12 that leaves you open to pick anybody
13 that can meet that criteria including
14 yourself. 'Cause what are they gonna
15 say? They're gonna say, they want
16 somebody that supports my agenda,
17 that'll help me get things done blah,
18 blah, blah. And the only tricky one is
19 if they say we, we think we need an
20 African American, because of uh my
21 seat's an African American seat.

22 BLAGOJEVICH They don't wanna be saying that.

23 HARRIS They don't wanna be saying that so,
24 like, how are they gonna say, they're
25 simply gonna have to talk in big
26 platitudes.

27 BLAGOJEVICH Their not gonna say that. That's why
28 they sent, uh, Balanoff and, um, Andy
29 Stern to see us. I'm telling you they
30 were sent by them. Those guys came at
31 the behest of O-, Obama's people. I
32 believe. And you know the, don't you?

33 HARRIS Um, it's possible I'm just saying, I
34 just, not quite sure why they need to be
35 so indirect. I mean there's so many
36 other people we have common friends.

37 BLAGOJEVICH Because, it's pretty obvious. A, Obama
38 doesn't want it getting out that he's
39 pushing somebody.

1 HARRIS Right.

2 BLAGOJEVICH Okay, who's black. For Obama's pol-,
3 politics. All of a sudden first black
4 president the first thing he does is, I
5 want a black senator.

6 HARRIS Uh-huh.

7 BLAGOJEVICH What does that say to uh?

8 HARRIS (UI) after all the effort he went to to
9 not make it about race.

10 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

11 (PAUSE)

12 BLAGOJEVICH Right?

13 HARRIS Right?

14 BLAGOJEVICH That's very obviously what he, what
15 their, their concern is. And then the
16 other thing is um, Balanoff and Stern
17 they prefer not to have Jan and some of
18 their other allies know that they're
19 acting as, in a, in a rol-, in a p-
20 process that could mean somebody other
21 than them get the Senate seat.

22 HARRIS Right.

23 (PAUSE)

24 BLAGOJEVICH You think...

25 HARRIS Well then all that, all that plays into
26 our favor then.

27 BLAGOJEVICH What's that?

28 HARRIS I mean we ought to assume that's the
29 case, in either case. There's no reason
30 to assume otherwise.

31 BLAGOJEVICH Assume what?

1 HARRIS That they were sent by Obama.

2 BLAGOJEVICH Correct. That's right.

3 HARRIS There's no risk in assuming otherwise.

4 BLAGOJEVICH I think that's right.

5 HARRIS I should say there's no risk in as-, in
6 assuming that.

7 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

8 (PAUSE)

9 HARRIS We just want to get them a little more
10 pregnant with us. We need to force 'em
11 to be a little bit more overt. That
12 enhances our ability to negotiate.

13 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

14 HARRIS Otherwise we're gonna be negotiating
15 with thin air.

16 BLAGOJEVICH Right and then how do ya get this Health
17 and Human Services thing in there? How
18 do we get that in the mix?

19 HARRIS Well I thought, I thought the answer
20 kinda revealed itself to us yesterday
21 with the, uh, Andy Stern and Obama. I
22 mean Andy Stern and Balanoff. They'd be
23 the perfect emissaries for something
24 like that.

25 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah, I like that. When, when would you
26 make the play? You, you wait for them
27 to come to us or we come to them or we
28 give it a little time and then see and
29 if nothing happens we make the move or
30 what? I mean once this happens, you
31 know, all the supplicants begin the
32 process of, you know, putting their hat
33 in the ring for stuff and their
34 supporters and others will be pushing
35 hard.

1 HARRIS I think you throw the call into Axelrod,
2 either he raises the issue or he doesn't
3 raise the issue.

4 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah so that's tomorrow morning right?

5 HARRIS (UI). If he doesn't raise the issue,
6 then I call him and I'm a little bit
7 more direct. Right?

8 BLAGOJEVICH You call him?

9 HARRIS (UI). And I call him and say do you
10 guys have a horse in the race? Um, ask
11 him if they have a horse in the race?
12 If he says, um, whatever he says to us,
13 we report that back to Andy and say hey
14 we took your advice we called him and
15 this is what happened.

16 BLAGOJEVICH This is good what you're saying, keep
17 going.

18
19 HARRIS And then uh, kinda keep them in the mix
20 the whole time. And then I, I have a
21 talk with uh, Balanoff about DHS, um,
22 the secretary position.

23 (PAUSE)

24 BLAGOJEVICH We'll know more about SEIU's role there
25 right?

26 HARRIS Right, and how, how much they want to
27 remain engaged. And how much they want
28 to remain engaged will indicate to us
29 how important it is to Barack. Because
30 if they simply say, oh that was nice,
31 you called him, good, okay bye, you're,
32 you guys are on your own now. You know
33 what I'm saying?

34 BLAGOJEVICH Mm-hmm.

35 HARRIS I don't think they'll say that.

36 (PAUSE)

1 HARRIS And it's better if Andy if uh, if uh,
2 David Axelrod tells us well yeah we have
3 some ideas about what kind of person it
4 ought to be. And it ought to be
5 somebody that's gonna support Barack,
6 but not name names and not say anything
7 about African American then I think, uh,
8 we report that back to Andy and to Tom
9 and say this is what they said. So um,
10 and we tell Andy and Tom, as far as were
11 concerned, they don't have a preference.
12 And see what happens from that, 'cause
13 they'll report that back to the, uh,
14 Obama camp that, you know, we're dumb as
15 a box of rocks, we haven't picked up on
16 any clues yet. They need to be a little
17 bit more direct.

18 BLAGOJEVICH (Laughs)

19 (PAUSE)

20 HARRIS So we can play stupid the whole time,
21 and make them be a little bit more
22 direct. And once they become more
23 direct we make our counter offer.

24 (PAUSE)

25 BLAGOJEVICH I need a timeline, and I, I don't
26 believe November 17th is anything I need
27 to be careful, you know, mindful of.
28 That's just way too soon. And this
29 Delaware stuff I don't think matters.

30 HARRIS I think, you know I think the real
31 timeline is uh...

32 BLAGOJEVICH January.

33 HARRIS ...between, um, December 15th and
34 December 25th.

35 BLAGOJEVICH December 15th and December 25th?

36 HARRIS Yeah.

37 BLAGOJEVICH What do you mean by that?

1 HARRIS Well the 15th is the Electoral College,
2 right?

3 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah.

4 HARRIS Assuming now he's resigned before hand,
5 if he doesn't resign then the timeline
6 is whenever he resigns right?

7 BLAGOJEVICH Keep going yeah. 25th, Christmas,
8 what's that?

9 HARRIS Just in the week after Christmas and New
10 Year's no one's paying attention to
11 anything.

12 BLAGOJEVICH So do it then?

13 HARRIS No, I'm saying I don't know if that's a
14 good time to do it. If you're trying to
15 make...

16 (PAUSE)

17 BLAGOJEVICH You're saying between the 15th and the
18 25th?

19 HARRIS Correct.

20 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah right...

21 HARRIS So that's gonna be when the negot-

22 BLAGOJEVICH No, I see what you're saying.

23 HARRIS ...that's when the negotiations have to
24 happen. The announcement we can decide
25 later. And the decision should be made,
26 you know that's the sweet spot in the
27 negotiations, the 15th, between the 15th
28 and the 25th.

29 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah, 24th.

30 HARRIS Right.

31 (PAUSE)

1 BLAGOJEVICH I want you to keep thinking about the
2 tactical play now and the, and the
3 negotiating play.

4 (PAUSE)

5 BLAGOJEVICH We, you know, then we gotta figure out
6 the Madigan play if there is one, right?

7 HARRIS Right.

8 BLAGOJEVICH We've got Emil as a fallback but not a
9 very inspiring thought, the best he can
10 do for me is raise money for me.
11 There's not much more he can do.

12 HARRIS I was gonna go see uh, DeLeo later this
13 afternoon out in his neck of the woods,
14 in his ward office. Ah, should we start
15 feeling him out about feeling Madigan
16 out?

17 BLAGOJEVICH No, I don't think so yet. I, I don't, I
18 want to talk about it. Let's think
19 about that. What time you gonna see
20 DeLeo?

21 HARRIS Oh not till like 2 or something, 2 or 3.

22 (PAUSE)

23 BLAGOJEVICH You'd want him to go Madigan huh, not
24 Jay?

25 HARRIS Not Jay.

26 BLAGOJEVICH I agree with you.

27 (PAUSE)

28 BLAGOJEVICH Negotiating with Madigan and suggesting
29 his daughter, and then can't make a deal
30 with him that I'm gonna be satisfied
31 with, right?

32 HARRIS Right.

1 BLAGOJEVICH Then I end up using my ace in the hole
2 and I send myself. Right?

3 HARRIS Right.

4 BLAGOJEVICH Among the reasons I ended up having to
5 fall back on this position was I
6 couldn't get the Democratic speaker and
7 party chairman to agree that if I sent
8 his daughter to the U.S. Senate all he
9 had to do in exchange for that was to
10 provide health care, pass a health care
11 plan that Obama supports, a job's plan
12 that Obama supports and balance the
13 budget without raising taxes on people
14 which is what Obama was elected on.
15 Right?

16 HARRIS Right.

17 BLAGOJEVICH That's a...

18 HARRIS We may, we may have to take the high
19 risk strategy and, uh, maybe if no one's
20 coming to us we throw your name out
21 there.

22 BLAGOJEVICH I wouldn't say that. Naw, I don't do
23 that. I mean...

24 HARRIS That's the risky strategy.

25 BLAGOJEVICH ...you can have all kinds of editorials
26 just fuckin', pissin' on that.

27 HARRIS Yeah, they'll, that's the, that's, the
28 risk is they'll blast you in the mean
29 time...

30 BLAGOJEVICH I'm worried about them doing it if
31 there's a delay you know? We gotta
32 think about what we say about that.

33 (PAUSE)

34 HARRIS You know, were just in discussion with,
35 we're in discussions with several
36 interested parties.

1 BLAGOJEVICH That's what I'm thinking of saying.
2 Exactly right.

3 HARRIS We'll kinda leave it vague.

4 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah, what about yourself? What uh, I'm
5 not having a discussion with myself
6 about this. That's not one of the
7 people I'm discussing this with.

8 HARRIS Right.

9 BLAGOJEVICH Huh?

10 HARRIS Right, right, I'm not discussing...

11 BLAGOJEVICH Okay.

12 HARRIS ...I'm not having any discussions with
13 myself at this time.

14 BLAGOJEVICH I'm crazy, but I'm not nuts.

15 HARRIS (Laughs)

16 BLAGOJEVICH (Chuckles) Right?

17 HARRIS One second Rod.

18 * * * * *

19 BLAGOJEVICH Oh, okay I don't want to hold you up
20 then. Alright, you'll think about this,
21 right?

22 HARRIS Yes, sir.

23 BLAGOJEVICH There's opportunity here. Now I want
24 you to think about, you know, look, I'm
25 gonna offer in good faith to make a
26 good, a decision for the U.S. senator
27 but it, it, it is not coming for free.
28 It's gonna come, it's gotta be good
29 stuff for the people of Illinois and
30 good for me. That's what I'm looking
31 at.

32 HARRIS (UI)

1 BLAGOJEVICH And if I can't get the right deal John,
2 then I'll take it myself. That's kinda
3 where I'm at. And that'll make me
4 negotiate better and get a better deal.
5 What do you think of that?

6 HARRIS Right, right. And I think just
7 publically we gotta make sure we're
8 always talking about best interests of
9 the state, best interests of the
10 state...

11 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

12 HARRIS ...best interests of the state...

13 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

14 HARRIS That's kind of the mantra.

15 BLAGOJEVICH Best interests of the state and somebody
16 who can do the most good for the state
17 and for the people of Illinois, most
18 good for the people of Illinois.

19 HARRIS Right. Not the most good for Barack,
20 not the most good for you...

21 BLAGOJEVICH Right.

22 HARRIS ...first and foremost, the most good for
23 the people of Illinois.

24 BLAGOJEVICH Right. But you agree, the way, the way
25 I'm gonna negotiate this one is, I've
26 always got the fallback as long as I
27 cover, you know, I'm not removed, hence
28 Emil's important. You wanna go to this
29 thing with me tonight?

30 HARRIS Not really, no.

31 BLAGOJEVICH Okay.

32 HARRIS I was, I was gonna watch it with the
33 kids.

34 BLAGOJEVICH Okay.

1 HARRIS They got uh, they got a social studies
2 assignment...

3 BLAGOJEVICH Yeah, yeah don't worry about it. So uh,
4 um, yeah I mean that, you know, that's,
5 you know, Obama you want it, fine, it's
6 gotta be good otherwise I'm, you know, I
7 could always take it. You know what I'm
8 saying?

9 HARRIS Right.

10 BLAGOJEVICH You agree with that?

11 HARRIS Yeah, absolutely.

12 BLAGOJEVICH Okay, alright enjoy your breakfast.

13 HARRIS Sure.

14 BLAGOJEVICH Alright bye.